

JUNETEENTH

“BEYOND EMANCIPATION CONTINUING TOWARDS EMPOWERMENT”
JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION 2005 – LANSING, MICHIGAN

www.LansingJuneteenthCelebration.org

June 7, 2005

Representative Leon Drolet, Chair
and Members of House Government
Operations Committee

Greetings from the Lansing Juneteenth Committee! I am Marilyn Plummer, Coordinator of the Capitol Kick-off Ceremony. We are excited and appreciate the opportunity to address you today on behalf of Senate Bill 384 introduced by Senator Martha Scott.

With me today I have members of the Lansing Juneteenth Committee, Michael McFadden and Shirley Carter, our chairperson of our committee is Debra Plummer and Rev. A. Richard Doss, Board Chairman of our parent organization Progressive Empowerment Education Resources Services (PEERS) we support SB 384.

June 19, 1865 coined as “Juneteenth” is of great historical significance and is the oldest African American Holiday. “Juneteenth represents the joy of freedom-the chance for a new beginning”. It was on June 19, 1865 that news of the Emancipation Proclamation, which President Lincoln signed on January 1, 1863, reached the slaves of Texas. Learning of their freedom, this day of June 19, 1865 became the true Independence Day for African-Americans ending slavery in the United States. The celebration of *Juneteenth* encourages communities to become educated about our history, to strive to understand and respect our various cultures.

This year, June 19, 2005 marks the 140th anniversary of Juneteenth. Juneteenth celebrations have grown throughout this country with the states of Texas and Oklahoma being the first to name Juneteenth as a state holiday. The city of Flint is in its 15th year; Lansing is in its 12th year, the city of Jackson in its second year, and Detroit, its first year of celebration. Grand Rapids and Saginaw both have citywide celebrations as well. We have and will continue to support and publicize this great historical day.

Please remember Juneteenth. It was President Lincoln who declared it on January 1, 1863. It was General Gordon Granger who delivered the message on June 19, 1865 in Galveston Texas to the slaves. And it was Al Edward's legislation that designated it (Juneteenth in Texas on June 19, 1980 as the first state to recognize Juneteenth as a state holiday.

We appreciate the effort of Senator Scott and the Legislative Black Caucus who have introduced legislation year after year and we appreciate Rep. Drolet scheduling the bill. We encourage this committee to support this legislation.

We say thank you to Rep. Michael Murphy and Senator Virg Bernero for their support, they both serve as our Co-Hosts of the Capitol Kick-off Ceremony. We invite you to share with us on Thursday, June 16th at 5:30 by kicking-off this year's celebration in Lansing at the State Capitol Building along with other Juneteenth Committees from around the state. We look forward to receiving your support and participation in the planned activities of this year's Juneteenth state wide celebrations.

Lansing Juneteenth Committee – Debra Plummer, Committee Chairperson

Progressive Empowerment Education Resource Services – P.E.E.R.S. 501(c)(3)

Rev. A. Richard Doss, Board Chairperson – Rodney Shepard, President

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